

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Alumnae Profile

by Margaret McGlohon '81C

Dr. June Gunter '83C

*Founder and CEO for Teaching Horse
Selma, N.C.*

A Message from Our Alumnae Director:

I had the great pleasure of visiting with June the week of April 29, while we were all still under quarantine here in North Carolina from the COVID-19 (corona) virus outbreak. There are so many amazing Saint Mary's stories and I am thrilled to share another life-long connection between an alumna and her alma mater!

Discovering Saint Mary's

June Gunter's story begins as a six-year-old child. "I confess. I did not really like being around people, other than family members as a child," she shares. "Starting school didn't sound fun."

However, as fate would have it, her first school experience was a good one. "It was my teacher. She was kind, patient, and attentive, and she helped me to like school."

During the first grade, June's teacher became engaged and invited June and her parents to attend the wedding held in the Saint Mary's Chapel. As her family was heading to the Chapel, her mother said, "June, this is where you will go to school one day!"

Fast forward to high school and as June recalls, "My experience with teachers after the first grade was all downhill, and I wasn't quite sure if college was in my future."

She admits to not being a stellar student and says she was bored most of the time. "But, my parents never gave up on me and were going to do whatever it took to make sure I got an education."

One day her father told her to "get in the car." They drove her from Durham to Raleigh and into the Grove, around the circle, onto the Saint Mary's campus.

"I took the tour, had an interview, and I figured that 30 minutes wasn't too far from home," she says and laughs. "I agreed to attend."

June admits that at Saint Mary's she found a love of learning. "My professors were willing to engage me in my way of thinking – many times, it was outside the box. And, my peers looked to *me* for help. I was shocked my classmates wanted my help!"

Classmates appreciated how June explained and thought about a variety of subjects. During her time as an unofficial peer tutor, June discovered her ability to teach. She also found a love for Psychology.

A Talent for Teaching and Leadership

After two years at Saint Mary's, June completed a college degree at East Carolina University, obtaining



5 QUESTIONS FOR

Dr. June Gunter '83C
Founder and CEO for Teaching Horse
Selma, N.C.

BEACH OR MOUNTAINS?

Mountains (West Coast)

SECRET TALENT?

I can Waltz. (I'm taking lessons.)

DOGS OR CATS?

Cats

CHOCOLATE OR VANILLA

Vanilla

FAVORITE JAM?

Anything by Barbra Streisand or
Queen ("Jukebox Hero")

Learn more about June on our website:
WWW.SMS.EDU/ALUMNAEPROFILES

WWW.SMS.EDU/ALUMNAEPROFILES

Continued...

a bachelor's degree in Psychology and later, in 1986, a Master's in Organizational Psychology.

"While I was a teaching assistant in graduate school, one professor had a health issue and could no longer teach. I took over his course and again realized that teaching was my calling."

While searching for doctoral programs, June visited Dr. Elgiva Watson, the Dean of Academics at Saint Mary's, and pitched a summer school course to Dr. Watson. The class was called "Making the Grade" and was designed for first-year students who needed help to improve their academic performance.

"As fate would have it, that summer the psychology teacher decided to leave Saint Mary's, and I was hired as an instructor of Psychology," she explains. "I ended up staying at Saint Mary's from 1988 to 1993."

During her tenure, she was able to also complete a doctoral program at North Carolina State University in Adult Learning and a minor in Cognitive Psychology.

While at Saint Mary's and in the spring of her final semester as a faculty member, June recalls being asked to share her story during an alumnae luncheon.

"I told this group of alumnae how I wasn't much of a student, but my first grade teacher inspired me, and that I'd attended her wedding in the Saint Mary's Chapel, and how my mom had said, 'You'll go to Saint Mary's one day!' At the end of my story, an alumna stood up and said, 'I was your first-grade teacher! What a small world!'"

The alumna was Clarine Pollock Powell '69C, and what a wonderful connection it was. June ended her tenure at Saint Mary's by speaking at Commencement. "It was the very same day I received my doctoral diploma. I'd had a request from Dr. Jenkins just five days prior to the ceremony."

Life After Saint Mary's

June went to work in management development for Kaiser Permanente, and then to New York City as the Director of Change Management for Blue Cross Blue Shield. Later, she returned to Kaiser Permanente and relocated to the Bay Area (San Francisco, Ca.) to be the Practice Leader for Organizational Development.

"My adventure took me to Rogue River, Oregon. In 2004, while in Oregon, my partner Beth Hyjek and I co-founded TeachingHorse, which is now headquartered in Selma, NC," June explains.

TeachingHorse (www.teachinghorse.com) is a leadership development company whose approach is inspired by how horses lead their herds. "We specialize in experiential learning, which includes working with horses," she says. "Our vision is to advance the practice of authenticity, collaboration, and shared leadership. By learning from horses, living and leading their herds, we can re-ground ourselves in natural truths about leadership to become more agile and adaptive."

June was invited back to the Saint Mary's campus as a Career Day speaker in 2013 and met several administrators who were interested in June working with the faculty. Since that time, June has partnered with Saint Mary's to work not only with teachers and the Leadership Team, she is also partnering now with 10th graders in the Seminar Program.

"The goal in working with the students at Saint Mary's is to empower them to lead through uncertainty and shape their thinking as emerging leaders," says June. "I realize today's young people are living in an uncertain world, one that is always changing, and filled with pressures different from those I faced

Continued...

forty years ago. By designing a curriculum for girls, TeachingHorse provides that experimental learning to help these girls learn how to make good decisions now and stay ready to adapt in the future."

The goals of Saint Mary's 10th grade Seminar Program are to prepare students to use their attention to notice themselves, the people they are leading/serving, and the environment around them; to use what they notice to set direction for their lives/careers; to choose the energy they bring to being leaders, and to be congruent, using their voice to make a difference in the world.

When asked what June is learning from the Saint Mary's students, she said, "Wow! What am I not learning? They've been teaching me about the real world – their world."

June also notes that getting to know and working with these young women gives her hope for all of our futures. "When you engage these girls, they don't hesitate to use their voice, and their wisdom is greater than their years."

When not traveling the world to be with clients, you might find June and Beth hiking in the Sedona mountains, or sitting on her front porch enjoying coffee and a good book. "I'm always near my animals," she said. And, that includes five horses, six cats, and two dogs!

During the stay-at-home quarantine order, June has been spending time contemplating the future and how they will be able to adapt their company to continue to be relevant. "I'm confident that TeachingHorse will be around for a long, long time," she adds.

June is also excited about her new business, GO-OD Consulting (*pronounced good*). A company we'll all be learning more about soon (www.go-odconsulting.com).

"GO-OD Consulting is geared to support local entrepreneurial companies with leadership development, team building, and leadership coaching," she explains.

No doubt, June's work will continue to be relevant and we are thrilled that she's sharing her expertise with our faculty and students. How lucky we are to call June a Saint Mary's girl and that she's giving back in such amazing ways to her alma mater!

Saint Mary's alumnae like Dr. June Gunter '83C graduate with the skills, knowledge, and integrity they need for success. Whether furthering their education, pursuing professional careers, raising their families, or leading as volunteers, our alumnae are agents for positive change in their communities. June's story demonstrates the ability Saint Mary's women have to do big things with their lives, and we're thrilled to share her story.

###

© 2019